

CBS NEWS -PERSON TO PERSON - JOHN F. KENNEDY (10-30-1953)

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From October 30th, CBS NEWS Edward Murrow interviews Massachusetts U.S Senator John F. Kennedy and his new wife Jackie at their home in Georgetown, Washington D.C.

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i'm told that all little boys have dreams some of them want to be policemen others would like to be football stars others would like to be a skipper on a navy ship others would like to be newspaper reporters or perhaps a united states senator or married to a most attractive bride senator john kennedy of massachusetts has accomplished all these things in his 36 years except being a policeman this seems to be rather the marrying season for senators the kennedys were married last month they're still looking for a place to live in washington on weekdays they stay up in boston at what used to be the bachelor establishment of the senator it's on the third floor of this building that you're looking at now over a barber shop just on the edge of beacon hill five blocks away is north church where the lanterns were hung on the night of paul revere's famous ride the boston massacre also took place not far from here but so much for the history let's go and meet the newlyweds are you there senator yes right here mr morrow good evening sir thank you good evening mr genevieve good evening uh i understand that the two of you had a very much publicized courtship uh how did the two of you meet we met um at the house of a friend about two years ago and uh you used to be a reporter didn't you yes i did and uh you first met the senator when you interviewed him well i met i interviewed him shortly after i met him well now which requires the most diplomacy to interview senators or to be married to what um well being married to one idea well uh have you opened all your wedding gifts uh well i've opened quite a few of them and i sent them all to washington we just have a couple back here aha senator i wonder if you would show us

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senator i wonder if you would show us around your uh uh apartment a bit certainly will find tomorrow this uh i remember when you were over in england and i thought you uh might remember this picture that uh was taken when my family were all over there in 1939 when my father was an ambassador oh i remember it very well there he is in the center isn't he yes that's right and i have my eight brothers and sisters that's almost the last time we were all taken together and uh brings back uh happy memories well senator you had some uh rather anxious moments yourself during the war didn't you yes i did uh you were you were in pt boats weren't you yes i was during the solomon islands uh campaign uh we worked off of uh first off of tulagi and then off the rendova in the new georgia island and then uh finally up close to bella labella uh towards the end of 1943. is that a model of your pt boat there yes it is that was made over at uh by some friends of mine over at the boston navy yard the pt on which i was on pc109 was uh cut in two uh while we were attacking attacking a jack jack destroyer in the uh in the on august 2nd 1943 and we more or less hit head-on uh at least he hit over through here and and cut through to the end of the boat and uh proceeded unfortunately on his way we uh after about uh seven or six six or seven days we landed on nuru island and ran into a native and we gave him a coconut and with a message written on it which he took back to rendova when i get back to rendova a couple of days later we i picked up the coconut and i have it here in plastic with so it's pretty well uh shrunk up but at least it uh reminds me of a interesting uh experience uh interesting

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interesting uh experience uh interesting i i should think that would be one of the great understatements uh senator what's the picture just above the coconut there on the wall well that's a picture of a uh the destroyer 850 which was named after my brother he was a uh after they land the d-day the rocket emplacements as you remember were bothering the british and uh they sent over some radar controlled planes which the fire was supposed to bail out and then the plane was to be uh guided into the target the rocket emplacement but the plane blew up too soon and uh so this destroyer was named after him by the navy uh you might be interested to know to prove that wars sometimes bring people together during the campaign last summer it was written up in time magazine that i was running and it mentioned our experience in the solomons and i got a letter about a month later from the commander of the japanese destroyer which ran ran us down which turned out to be the amigari he read when i read the time magazine of august 18 1952 which mentioned the battle in question my memory being refreshed i can vividly recall what happened at the time he said it was early in june 1943 i was transferred to rabbal as the commander of the destroyer amigiri in that time the counterattack of the american forces became increasingly offensive in one of the night battles in august 1943 i cited a bold enemy boat of small size was heading directly towards my destroyer of a larger type having no time to exchange gunfire the ships came so close to each other my destroyer had to surprise my destroyer had to directly hit the enemy boat slicing it in two to my great surprise this boat happened to be the pt uh which was under your command and uh so that uh he sent me good wishes in the campaign and i hope sometimes i ever go to japan to meet him well senator since we're talking about the last war uh do you think we're ready for an all-out war now if another should come

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war now if another should come well i i think that uh there is a great deal we have to do i think of course the basic question which we're now attempting to decide is whether we should attempt to build up and devote a great deal of our money to a strong continental defense system and a effective strategic air force or whether really the best hope of survivor rests in a air force second to none with retaliatory powers it will be sufficient to force the russians to hold their hand unfortunately today i don't think we're doing either and due to the stretch outs of 1952 and then again in 1953 in air force power instead of having 143 air groups that the chief of staff considered to be the minimum for our defense in 1944 in 1954 we're now only going to have a 126 group by the end of 1956. so that i don't think that a nation which is as rich and powerful as ours should be satisfied with anything less than an air force second to none i don't think today we have it in addition i think we have a great deal to do in attempting to build up the strength in our western european allies and in addition i don't think we should resign ourselves to the ultimate prospect of an atomic war but should attempt to work out uh some arrangement perhaps only through being so strong ourselves that we can avert it because that will be the ruin of everything that is important in this country and all over the world well senator let's change to uh a domestic subject uh you're a member of the labor committee aren't you uh yes it's tomorrow i was in it for six years in the house and i'm on it now in the in the senate and there's a great deal of talk about changing the taft-hartley law uh what's wrong with it in your view well i i think that uh some things are right uh perhaps somebody can answer my phone i guess i think there are some things that are good about it i think the attempt to provide a democracy for the union members to do something about national emergency so i don't think provisions are completely satisfactory and i was for the communist affidavit uh resolution in 1947 however i do think that in time of depression when there was a large group of unemployed that the

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group of unemployed that the taft-hartley would be a at least provisions of it uh those provisions i think the secondary boycott provision is too stern i think the provision which provides the state uh state laws are more harsh on union security arrangements that they should uh be superior to the federal law i think the provision which doesn't permit union members uh which permits strike breakers to vote if union members go out on strike whether there should be a union or not i think those are some of the provisions that might be changed i

hope we can get some unanimous agreement as we've been talking really about changing the taft hockney bill since 1947 but i see uh that my wife is back so we'll get back to i brought you one of uh the wedding presents which i think is jack's favorite which is always throwing around this apartment well this uh present was a present from jim farrell who was in charge of handing out athletic equipment when i was in college at harvard and he's still doing it this probably was the football that harvard was going to use for his first game but in any case he sent it to me and i certainly appreciated it and uh i must say it's probably my favorite well senator uh could i ask you another question on domestic affairs yeah i'm told that some of your constituents are worried about the possibility of a depression do you share their concern in this matter well i think uh mr murray was still in pretty good shape uh nationwide but i i do know as of course we're all concerned about the drop in farm prices which was a preliminary as you remember to the depression in 1929 a good farm policy to do something about that has to be the first job i think of the coming congress in addition our production index dropped in september over august and it usually moves up i don't think there needs to be a depression and i think if we are a recession and i think if we take advantage of our built-in stabilizers in our economy a strong farm program uh boosting up social security payments and maybe raising the minimum wage having a good credit policy and having an effective fiscal policy which will stimulate the economy of the country i think that we can move ahead and i think it's going to be a vital job because we

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it's going to be a vital job because we have to keep people working if we start to slip into a recession we'll have to reduce taxes more and perhaps increase government spending but savings are at an all-time high and i think that if we take effective countermeasures now before it's too late we are infinitely better off than we were in the late 20s to ward one off well senator i understand that you uh had a lot of tea parties during your campaign can you still drink tea well i do i can because it uh as a matter of fact i drank it then and it turned out very well so i must say i'm going to like do you it have a chance to do much reading yes uh well we i used to very much and i uh try to do it as much as i can now have you found anything that uh has been particularly useful or uh perhaps i could use the word inspirational do you well i do have uh something here was written by alan siegel whose huge number uh was born in new york and fought in the foreign legion and was killed in the first world war in 1916. he wrote that famous poem i have a rendezvous with death and just before he died he wrote a letter home to his mother which i think has good advice for all of us he said whether i am on the winning or losing side is not the point with me it is being on the side where my sympathies lie that matters success in life means doing that thing then which nothing else conceivable seems more noble or satisfying or remunerative and then being ready to see it through to the end i think that's probably good advice for all of us well senator kennedy thank you very much for letting us come to visit you and will you also express our thanks to mrs kennedy thank you very much tomorrow cyril we appreciate it very much uh we shall be going and

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